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A Yorùbá novelist's Perception of Courtship: An Examination of Fágúnwà's Novels

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates Fágúnwà's perception of courtship as depicted in his five novels. His work is chosen because the work top the list of the early novels published in Yorùbá language. Although there is much work on the novels, there is little or no work that is exclusively on the novelist's perception of courtship the gap this work tends to fill. Our theoretical framework is based on sociology of literature. Sociology of literature is an attempt to understand the inter-relationship between literature and society. Our findings show among others, that the novelist supports unrelenting persuasion and closeness to each other during courtship. According to Fágúnwà, letter and test-related types of courtship which are alien to Yoruba community should be imbibed into Yorùbá culture while condemning cohabitation. The paper reveals that the novelist does not support the use of Alárenà (matchmaker) between a man and a lady that want to go into courtship as he wants everyone to express his or her love to the opposite sex. The paper also reveals that Fágúnwà's exposure to foreign culture is responsible for his ability to depict the pros and cons of imbibing foreign culture into Yorùbá culture and at the same time making move for removal of Yoruba culture that allow only men to initiate proposal. The paper concludes that the Yorùbá society should complement the Yorùbá courtship process with good foreign courtship processes to meet the demands of the present day society.

Keywords: Fágúnwà, Courtship, Novelist, Proposal, Alárenà.

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1. Introduction

The term 'Yorùbá' can be regarded as the association of several subgroups bound to one another by language and tradition (Igue, 1973 p.9). The term also connotes the language as well as the culture of the people. Yorùbá occupies a large area in the South-Western part of Nigeria, West Africa extending through Lagos, Ògùn, Ọyó, Ọşun, Òhndó, Èkiti, Kogí and Ẹdó States (Olúmúyiwá and Aládésanmí, 2016 p.11). Yorùbá is also found in the Republics of Benin and Togo, and also in Brazil, Cuba, Sierra-Leone and Trinidad and Tobago. This paper concerns itself with the cultural aspect of Yoruba people that can be found in Nigeria only.

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Culture is the total manner in which a human society responds to an environment. It includes customs characterizing a social group; social heredity of a particular community; meaning, values, norms, their actions and relationships, beliefs, laws, traditions and institutions. Yorùbá institutions includes; chieftaincy, burial, marriage and naming. Marriage is compulsory in Yorùbáland. No person remained unmarried by choice after passing the age of thirty in case of men and twenty-five in case of women (Nathaniel Fádípè, 1970 p. 65). There are different types of marriage practiced by traditional Yorùbá. Fádípè (1970 p. 68) makes mention of four types; marriage to which the mutual consent of the relatives of the principal parties is necessary together with payment of owó-orí (bride-price); marriage in which the bride is made a free gift by her father to the husband; marriage by mutual consent of the principal parties which neither assumes the consent of parents nor involves the payment of bride-price; and the levirate. Adéoyè (1979 p.220) adds gbà-mí-o-rà-mi connoting 'heal me and marry me'. This type of marriage comes up between a sick woman that has been neglected by her husband because of her prolonged sickness and a herbalist that is able to heal her without payment. Of all these forms of marriage, the one which mutual consent of the relatives of the principal parties is necessary together with the payment of owó-orí (bride-price) is the most favoured as being typical and preferred and remains our concern in this work. This type of marriage is of various stages starting from lfojúsóde (searching for whom to marry). This is the time the immediate female relatives of the boy that wants a life partner; sisters, paternal aunts, or first cousins look round for a suitable mate for him. Immediately they succeed in making their choice, an Alárenà (a matchmaker or an intermediary) is hired. A female-Alárenà is always preferred because according to Yorùbá belief, a male-Alárenà may be tempted to seduce the lady into marrying him instead of delivering the man's message. Alárenà tries to find out information about the family of the lady and the man in question to know whether the families are free from diseases like leprosy, insanity or epilepsy, or social vices. The inquiry is invariably extended to cover the moral and social qualities of both father and mother. All these forms of inquiries are necessary in order to ensure soundness of stock and thus to eliminate as far as possible the risk of a union which would bring shame or unhappiness upon the family. It is the duty of Alárenà to say good things concerning the man. Whenever Alárenà observes that the lady is getting more interested in the relationship, she brings the man and the lady together for an interaction before she steps aside. In Yorùbá society, only male initiating proposal is allowed and this is done at this period of their friendship. From this time, both the man and the lady are free to build up their relationship; this marks the beginning of their courtship.

The time when two people have a romantic relationship before they get married or the process of developing this relationship is referred to as courtship. Courtship varies from culture to culture and from religion to religion. It may be an informal and a private matter between two people or may be a public affair, or a formal arrangement, with family approval. Courtship may be completely omitted, as in cases of some arranged marriages where the couple does not meet before the wedding for instance, net courtship. Courtship among Yorùbá refers to a period set aside by prospective lovers with a view to getting married. Our discussion in this work will be on Yoruba type of courtship.

In Yorùbá society, courtship is a highly structured activity with very specific formal rules. It is the role of a man to "court" or "woo" a lady, thus encouraging her to understand him. The man will also understand her receptiveness to his proposal of marriage. Olú Dáramólá and Adébáyò Jéjé (1967:36) explain that during courtship, the man and the lady meet regularly at various points in the day, moonlight or at any corner near the lady's house very early in the morning discussing love matters. This goes on for a long period after which the lady accepts officially to be the man's wife. The lady directs the man to arrange how her parents would know about their relationship. This acceptance is referred to as lǝhèhè or lǝshùn that is, the lady 'accepts the man's proposal' or that 'she answers him'. The first part of owó-orí (bride price) is paid to seal the compact. Without this payment the lady is not considered engaged to the man and no claim for damages lay to him in case of her adultery with someone else. From the time of this ceremony the man becomes ọkọ-àfésónà (the husband-to-be) and the girl becomes iyàwó-àfésónà (the wife-to-be). After betrothals, the prospective bride avoids as far as possible a meeting with either her fiancé or any of his known relations. Where it is not possible to avoid a meeting, a way out is nevertheless sought; the lady covers her face with a cloth and says nothing. This ceremonial modesty continues until some nine days after arrival in her husband's house when the

privilege of seeing her uncovered face starting from that time is purchased with a gift of money by a female member of her husband's immediate family: either his mother or a sister (Fádípè 1970 p.73). After the payment of the first part of owo-ori as said earlier, the lady and the man have their ìtoro (introduction) and later, idána (engagement ceremony) where the two family members and their well-wishers come together to celebrate. This is what is called ayeyè igbéyàwó (the wedding ceremony).

The explanation above shows that courtship is so much recognized in Yorùbá society. It is not surprising therefore seeing some Yorùbá novelists including matters concerning marriage especially, courtship, in their works since their sources are drawn from the society they write for. Among such novelists is Daniel Ọlórúnfẹmi Fágúnwà of Nigeria. Fágúnwà is chosen because his work top the list of the early novels published in Yorùbá language. He is the first indigenous Nigerian writer to write what can be described as a full-length novel; written in any indigenous Nigerian language (Ọláyòyè Abíoyè 1999 p.14). His five novels: Ọgbójú Ọdẹ ninú Igbó Irúnmọlẹ (Ọgbójú) (1938), Igbó Olódùmarè (Igbó) (1949), Ìrèké-oníbudó (Ìrèké) (1949), Ìrìnkèrindò nínú Igbó Elégbèje (Ìrìnkèrindò) (1954) and Àdìitú Olódùmarè (Àdìitú) (1961) are examined in order to know the writer's perception of courtship in Yoruba society as depicted in the novels. In all the five novels, Fágúnwà has made use of sources provided by his immediate locality. The framework in all his novels is very similar. They involve a particular adventure. His heroes are usually hunters who go on hunting exploits and come into conflict with various difficulties and problems. They demonstrate their herbal power and hunting ability. They meet with sages who lecture them on various issues of life. They return home to become important personalities in the community. Evidently, Fágúnwà adopts the simple literary form of the 'quest', a common motif in the genre of Yoruba folktale (Bísí Ọgúnşínà, 1992 p.76). Ayo Bamgbose (1975 p. 953) asserts that Fagunwa has been influenced by folktale tradition within which he was writing and that any meaningful study of his novels should have as its starting point a deep understanding of this tradition. Ọgúnşínà (1992 p.76-77) cites the work of Adétúgbò (1971 p.174) revealing two sources of Fágúnwà's novels which include fiction of the author's creation and fiction culled from the folktales which his community shares. Fágúnwà's place in the history of the Yorùbá cannot be over emphasized. This view is supported by Ọgúnşínà (1992 p.78) when he cites Bernard Shaw's description of Fágúnwà as one who adds fresh extension of sense to the heritage of the race, giving his readers a new intensive sense of inner emotional realities. Most of the elements used in his novels include stories, proverbs, language, humour and jokes which are almost commonplace features in the Yoruba society. It is therefore not out of place if the work of such a great novelist is examined.

2. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework adopted for this study is sociology of literature. The sociology of literature is a subfield of the sociology of culture. It studies the social production of literature and its social implications. Mme de Stael and Hippolyte Taine originated the term 'sociology of literature' in 19th century in France. ([www.answers.com>Home>Library>Literature&Language>LiteraryDictionary](http://www.answers.com/Home/Library/Literature&Language/LiteraryDictionary)). Ọgúnşínà (2006 p.5) sees the term 'sociology of literature' as a fusion of two distinct disciplines; sociology and literature. In its general sense, sociology is the science of social relationships as well as the consequences of those relationships for ongoing social systems and the process of social change. Literature, on the other hand, is concerned with man and his society. It is an art composed of words in such a way that it proffers entertainment, enlightenment, and relaxation. Sociology of literature therefore is an attempt to understand the inter-relationship between literature and society. It postulates that a work of art does not exist in isolation and should not be studied as such. The literary artist is not independent of his society; his personality is influenced by many socio-political and economic factors (Olúyémisí Adébòwálé, 2010 p. 224). Sociological criticism is interested in how literature comments on existing social hierarchies, and whether the text supports or criticizes them. Sometimes, it examines the artist's society to better understand the author's literary works, other times; it may examine the representation of such societal elements within the literature itself.

From the explanation given above, sociology of literature is seen as an examination of literature in the cultural, economic and political context in which it is written or received. It analyzes the relationships between the artist and the society. It sees the relation between a work of art, the artist, and the society as one of constant interaction, and that each one affects and is affected by the other. Since courtship is regarded as the property of the society, it is assumed that sociology of literature used

in this study will go a long way in determining Fágúnwà's perception of courtship as depicted in his novels.

3. A brief biography of Daniel Ọlórúnfẹmi Fágúnwà

Daniel Oròwólé (Orò, one of Yorùbá divinities, enters the house) Fágúnwà, popularly known as D.O. Fágúnwà, was born at Òkè-Igbó, Oñdó State, Nigeria in 1903. He studied at Saint Luke's School, Òkè-Igbó (1916-1924) and Saint Andrew's College, Ọyó (1926-1929) before becoming a teacher. His parents were converts to Christianity from traditional Yorùbá religion. Fágúnwà, as a result of Christian influence, gave up his middle name which is connected with the Orò cults and assumed another one, Ọlórúnfẹmi (God loves me). He got married to Mrs. Rachael Fágúnwà; a seamstress in 1937 after a period of courtship lasting six years, during which there was an uninterrupted exchange of love letters (Bámgbósé 1974 p.2). It was at this time of his life that his first novel, *Ògbójú Ọdẹ nínú Igbó Irúnmòlẹ* (*Ògbójú*) (1938) brought him to the Yorùbá literary scene. The book became instantly popular and was recommended for School use. He lost his father to death in 1939. Having worked as a teacher in several schools in Ọyó, Ọwò, Lagos, Benin, Igbóbì College, Lagos, he went to Britain on a British Council Scholarship in 1946. He came back in 1948 and taught at the Government Teacher Training Centre in Ìbàdàn. In 1950, Fágúnwà went back to Britain with the intention of studying for a degree but came back in 1955 before completing his studies in order to take up the position of Education Officer with the Publications Branch until 1959. Fágúnwà's later works include *Igbó Olódùmarè (Igbó)* (1949), *Ìrèké-onibùdó (Ìrèké)* (1949), *Ìrìnkèrindò nínú Igbó Elégbèje (Ìrìnkèrindò)* (1954) which won the Margaret Wrong prize in 1955, and *Àdìitú Olódùmarè (Àdìitú)* (1961). Each of the novels has been reprinted several times since that date even after the death of the author in 1963. For instance; the copies used for this work were printed between 2005 and 2013 respectively. Apart from novels, other publications written by Fágúnwà include *Ìrìnàjò Apá Kiní, Ìrìnàjò Apá Keji* (OUP, 1949) containing an account of his experience on his trip to Britain, *Ìtàn Olóyìn* (OUP, 1954) a collection of folk-tales edited by him, *Àṣàyàn Ìtàn*, (Nelson 1957) and *Táiwò àti Kẹhìndé Series*; a Primary School Yorùbá Reader with Fágúnwà and L.J. Lewis as joint authors. Fágúnwà was made a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) in 1959. By the mid-fifties, Fágúnwà had created a great impression in the Yorùbá literary scene. His literary creation was successful that his books not only had a ready market in schools, but also won the pleasure of illiterate parents who often requested their children to read the books to their hearing (Ògúnṣínà 1992:46-47). The popularity of his writing influenced many writers to adopt his pattern of writing which dominated Yorùbá novel writing until 1960s. It is relevant to note that Fágúnwà belongs to the elite class in the society. He had been exposed to the outside world either through reading or traveling to some developed countries such as United Kingdom and United States of America (Bámgbósé, 1974 p.2, Adéjùmò, 2008 p.79). He is a product of syncretized culture. As a representative of Heinemann Educational Books Ltd (a firm of publishers) in Nigeria, he went on a trip to Northern Nigeria. As he was waiting to cross the River Niger by ferry at Baro, he accidentally fell into the river and drowned on December 7, 1963 (Adéḃòwálé, 2016 p.3).

All of Fágúnwà's novels got incisive analysis and critical acclaim from eminent scholars. His works had been adapted for the stage, and some translated into English, notably by Wólé Ṣoyinká (1968) (*Forest of a Thousand Daemons; Ògbójú Ọdẹ nínú Igbó Irúnmòlẹ*) and Abióyè (1999)'s *Bridge Across Cultures* where he makes use of Fágúnwà's work to explain the importance of translation. There are series of theses and dissertations which Fágúnwà's novels had elicited among researchers in tertiary Institutions all over Nigeria and beyond. In 2016, the Yorùbá Studies Association of Nigeria came up with a book titled *Ọtun Ìmò nínú Ìtàn-Àròṣọ D.O. Fágúnwà (New Findings in the Novels of D.O. Fágúnwà)*. The book is a combination of works of many authors having different topics on novels of Fágúnwà. To date, researchers have worked on these novels.

4. Literature review on Fágúnwà's Novels

Researchers like Bámgbósé (1974), Ògúnṣínà (1992, 2006), Àrìnpé Adéjùmò (2008) and Ayòdélé Oyèwálé (2016) have shown one thing or the other on family matters in Fágúnwà's novels. Bámgbósé (1974 p.62), for instance, notes that Fágúnwà appears to be warning against polygamy, principally on the grounds of this perennial rivalry between wives and its effects on the family, especially the children.

Bámgbósé (1974 p.63-64) depicts that love is one of the major themes in the plot of Fágúnwà's novels; in each novel, the hero meets and marries only one woman, sometimes after a period of happy courtship and romance. Ògúnşínà (2006 p.115-116) depicts that the theme of women, children and marriage is given a wide coverage in the novels of Fágúnwà. He asserts that Fágúnwà's concern on women, children and marriage should not be seen as merely a pointer to the importance the Yoruba attach to marriage nor a condemnation of polygamy. Ògúnşínà explains that Fágúnwà's concern has social implications which can be fully understood when seen within the context of his society and his relationship with that society. He explains that most of Fágúnwà's comments on this aspect are symptomatic of the importance of the home and family in the society. Adéjùmò (2008 p.89) observes that Fágúnwà opposes the Yorùbá custom that prevents ladies to propose to men. Oyèwálé (2016 p.258) agrees that Fágúnwà calls for a change in some aspects of Yorùbá culture concerning love and marriage. Kéhìndé (2016 p. 83-89) agrees that Fágúnwà is neither a fantasy novelist nor folklorist but a writer who is very modern in his art as the stories in *Ògbójú Ọḍẹ* are seen as representations of social realities in an artistic world.

Although the work of these scholars enlighten us the more on Fágúnwà's perception of Yorùbá traditional marriage, yet, none of them to the best of our knowledge, discusses solely Fágúnwà's perception of courtship which is the bedrock of marriage. The focus of this paper, therefore, is to investigate Fágúnwà's perception of courtship as depicted in his five novels.

5. Fágúnwà's perception of courtship as depicted in his novels

We shall discuss Fágúnwà's perception of Yorùbá Courtship as depicted in his novels under the following sub-headings:

5.1 Letter-related-courtship

Fágúnwà depicts a letter-related-courtship in expressing one's love especially when the two prospective lovers are not in the same vicinity. In *Ìrìnkèrindò*, *Ìrìnkèrindò* and *Ìfẹ̀pàtàkì* exchange love letters until their love deepens till it results into marriage. Love letter strengthens the level of love between two lovers each time the letter is read. The novelist illustrates this in *Ìrìnkèrindò*'s reaction after the reading of *Ìfẹ̀pàtàkì*'s first letter. He is so happy that he says:

Nígbà tí mo rí ìwé yí, àfi bí ẹ̀ni pé wọ̀n fi mí ọ̀bà ní. Mo kà á lẹ̀ẹ̀kinní, mo kà á lẹ̀ẹ̀kejì, mo kà á lẹ̀ẹ̀kẹ̀ta, n kò sá lẹ̀ sọ iye ìgbà tí mo kà á tán. (*Ìrìnkèrindò* p.77)

When I saw this letter, it seems as if I was made a king. I read it the first time, the second time, the third time, and I couldn't even say the number of times I read it.

The exchange of these love letters continues between them until *Ìfẹ̀pàtàkì* agrees to marry *Ìrìnkèrindò*. In another context, *Ireke-onibudo* uses letter-writing as a substitute for a verbal communication. *Ìrèké-oníbùdó* who is too shy to express his love to *Ìfẹ̀pàdẹ̀* when the latter visits him decides after her departure, to write a love letter to her to cover his shyness. *Ìrèké-Oníbùdó* thus starts courting *Ìfẹ̀pàdẹ̀*.

5.2 Test-Related-courtship

Fágúnwà also depicts that courtship can be test-related. In this type of courtship, a lady tests a man to know how powerful, loving, and caring he is. In *Ògbójú*, a beautiful lady tests *Àkàrà-oògùn* that proposes to her; *Akara-oogun* holds the beautiful lady firmly even when the lady changes to a big tree, a deer, flame, a big bird, a river, and a snake until she changes to the beautiful lady and says:

Èmi yóò fẹ́ ọ̀ iwọ̀ ọ̀gbójú ọ̀ḍẹ. (*Ògbójú* p. 44).

I will marry you, a valiant hunter.

After the test, they have their wedding ceremony. Another instance comes up during the courtship of *Baba-Onirùngbòṅ-yẹúké*'s parents. His father proposes to his mother who takes him to her parents to be tested. The father fights with a lion, a leopard, and a boa respectively; the parents starve him for seven days. In addition to his physical strength, he has got no reason for loving the woman. The woman agrees to marry him because according to her, *Baba-Onirùngbòṅ-yẹúké*'s father has a perfect love for her and for this; she regards him as a wise man. The woman says:

Ng ó fẹ́ ọ̀ iwọ̀ ọ̀lógbọ̀n ọ̀kunrin nitori ifẹ́ tí ó pé jù lọ ní ifẹ́ tí ẹ̀niyàn kò lẹ̀ sọ ìdí rẹ. (*Igbó* p. 95-96)

I will marry you the wise man for the most perfect love is the love one cannot give reason for.

The novelist is indirectly saying that courtship is not always a bed of roses. Going through a hard time with a lady automatically indicates the type of love the man has for her. The importance of test at courtship cannot be over emphasized. The novelist explains that in addition to beauty, women of old married men that were strong, wise and had a deep love for them (*Igbó* p. 95). In his view, strength, wisdom and love which he calls *ifẹ ijìnጅ* (deep love) solidify courtship.

6. Reciprocity in love

Fágúnwà knows the importance of reciprocity in love; he establishes that love should be reciprocal when it comes to courtship where the two parties involved have to love each other. It is this type of love that will solidify their marriage. Fágúnwà confirms this notion when *Ìrìnkèrindò* says:

Mo rí i pé ifẹ kí í ẹ ọ̀ràn ẹ̀nikan, ọ̀ràn ẹ̀ni méjì ni. Kì í ẹ pé kí ọ̀kùnrin kan ma fẹ̀ràn obìnrin kan, kí ó ma fẹ̀ràn obìnrin yìí, kí òun nìkan ma fẹ̀ràn rẹ̀ ẹ̀sa láì jẹ̀ pé onítòhún nàà fi ifẹ̀ hàn sí òun ni ifẹ̀ fi lẹ̀ dàgbà, bẹ̀ẹ̀ ni kí í ẹ pé kí obìnrin ma fẹ̀ràn ọ̀kùnrin kí òun nìkan ma fẹ̀ràn ọ̀kùnrin ẹ̀sa láì jẹ̀ pé ọ̀kùnrin nàà fi ifẹ̀ tirẹ̀ hàn sí i ni ifẹ̀ fi lẹ̀ gòkè rárá. (*Ìrìnkèrindò* p. 82).

I notice that love is not one man's business, it involves two parties. It is not for a man to show love to a woman and the woman refuses to reciprocate that can make love grow, also, it is not when a woman shows love to a man continually and the man fails to reciprocate that can make love develop.

7. Relentless pressure

The novelist also shows that courtship needs persistence. The novelist shows this in one of *Ìfẹ̀pàtàkì's* letters to *Ìrìnkèrindò* in *Ìrìnkèrindò*. *Ìfẹ̀pàtàkì* decides not to have anything to do with marriage in life when *Ìrìnkèrindò* proposes to her. She changes her mind when she notices how *Ìrìnkèrindò* persistently writes love-letters to win her heart. She says in her acceptance letter that:

Mo rò pé mo ti sọ̀ fún ọ̀ ní ijọ́sì bí ó ti jẹ̀ pé mo ti pinnu láti igbà ẹ̀we mi wá pé n kò ní fẹ̀ ẹ̀nikẹ̀ni sùgbọ̀n wi pe ng ó dúrò ní tẹ̀mi láì ní ọ̀kọ̀ ni, sùgbọ̀n nígbà tí mo wo aápon gbogbo tí o ti ní ẹ̀ lórí mi láti ọ̀jọ̀ tí a ti jọ̀ ní bọ̀ yìí, mo rí i pé kò ní dára bí mo bá kọ̀ jálẹ̀, nítorí kò yẹ̀ kí ǹnkankan wà ti mo lẹ̀ fi dù ọ̀. Nítorí nàà mo rò pé ọ̀rọ̀ nàà yóò ẹ̀ẹ̀sẹ̀. (*Ìrìnkèrindò* p. 82).

I thought I have told you sometimes ago about the decision I took from my youth not to involve myself in any marriage but to remain single, but when I observe your restlessness on me since we met, I discover that it is not good to reject totally, because there should be nothing I can deny you of. Therefore, I think your request will be granted.

This is in line with a Yorùbá adage that says *kò jẹ̀ kí n simi ni obìnrin ní gba ọ̀rẹ̀ fún* only a man's persistence wins a woman's heart. In Yorùbá society, no lady accepts marrying a man at first sight. Even if she loves the man, she will not display or show it immediately. Therefore, the novelist supports the Yorùbá notion that before a man can gain a woman's heart, he needs persistence and perseverance.

8. Close relationship strengthens love

Fágúnwà portrays that courtship leads to intimacy. In his opinion, the man and the woman courting should have a close relationship to strengthen their love. The lives of *Ìrèké-oníbùdó* and *Ìfẹ̀pàdẹ̀* in *Ìrèké* demonstrate this; the two of them spend much time together and share many things together. *Ìrèké-oníbùdó* confirms this when he says:

Kò sí ọ̀jọ̀ kan tí a kò ní rí ara wa, bí n kò lọ̀ sí ọ̀dò̀ rẹ̀ yóò wá sí tẹ̀mi. Síbí kan soṣo ni àwa méjì fi ifẹ̀un, bí ó bá bu ẹ̀kún síbí irẹ̀sì tàbí ẹ̀wà, a gbé e fún mi, n ó bù diẹ̀ jẹ̀ ẹ̀yí tí ó bá ẹ̀kù òun nàà a jẹ̀ ẹ̀. (*Ìrèké* p. 87).

There is never a day we will not see each other, she either comes to me or I visit her. We use the same spoon, if she takes a spoonful of rice or beans, she gives me, I will eat of it and she eats the rest.

This relationship continues for quite a long time until they set a day aside for their wedding ceremony (*Ìrèké* p. 88). Intimacy gives room for better understanding. *Ìrìnkèrindò* in *Ìrìnkèrindò* visits *Ìfẹ̀pàtàkì* on several occasions to know more about her before their wedding day; he realizes that *Ìfẹ̀pàtàkì* is a good, reliable, trustworthy, and loving lady (*Ìrìnkèrindò* p. 83-84). This is in line with what operates in Yorùbá society where *Alárenà* (matchmaker) introduces the man and the lady to each other, leaves the two to move closer to each other to develop their relationship, although the lady does not visit the man's house. This is also in support of a Yorùbá adage that says *bí ọ̀kọ̀ bá mojú aya tán*,

alárenà a yèba' *the match-maker ought to withdraw when the love-birds become intimate*. This is to ensure close relationship between the two prospective lovers.

9. Proposal should be Unisex

Fágúnwà criticizes the general belief in Yorùbá society that ladies should not propose to men. In Yorùbá society, men propose to ladies (Ládélé, T.A.A. Mustapha, O., Awórìndé I.A., Oyèdèmi, O., and Ọládàpò, O. 1986 p.101). Fágúnwà shows his indifference to this Yoruba long time view. He expresses his view through Àjẹ̀diran in *Igbó* saying:

Mo fẹ́ kí o ránti pé àṣà burúkú àwọn ọmọ èniyàn kò fún obìnrin ní àyè àti yan ọkọ tí ọkàn rẹ́ fẹ́, àwọn ọkùnrin ni ó ní àyè àti kọ́ wí fún obìnrin wí pé kí ó fẹ́ àwọn. Bí ọkùnrin kan wu obìnrin láti fẹ́, àti sọ ọ́ jáde lẹnu a di ìṣòro fún obìnrin. Àṣà àwọn ọmọ èniyàn yíí ní fi iyà jẹ́ apá kan nínú àwọn ọmọ èniyàn bẹ̀ẹ̀ ní bí ọkùnrin rí ejò bí obìnrin pa ejò, bí ejò kò bá ti lọ kò lòdì sí òfin. (*Igbó* p. 26).

I want you to remember that the bad culture of human society does not give room for a lady to choose a husband for herself; it is only men that propose to ladies, if a lady loves a man, she dare not say it. This culture is punishing a group in the human society; however, if a man sees a snake and a woman kills it, it is not against the law in as much as the snake does not escape.

From the above excerpt, it is found out that the novelist emphasizes the issue of woman's right. In his view, either of the two sexes can propose to each other, hence he allows these proposals to take place; Ìrìnkèrindò (man) proposes to Ìfẹ́pàtàkì (lady) (*Ìrìnkèrindò* p. 79-80), Ìrèké-oníbudó (man) proposes to Ìfẹ́pàdè (lady) (*Ìrèké* p.83-84), Àkàrà-oògùn (man) proposes to a beautiful lady (*Ògbójú* p. 43-44), Àjẹ̀diran (lady) proposes to Olówó-aiyé (man) (*Igbó* p.26), and Àrà-òtò (woman) proposes to Ọ̀bédèjì (man) (*Àdìitú* p.140). All the proposals end in marriage.

In addition, Fágúnwà establishes the fact that a woman may get into a situation where it becomes necessary for her to propose to a man of her choice, the act Yorùbá society will not approve; a woman may have personal problem that can debar her from having someone to propose to her, in that case, the lady has to initiate a proposal. The novelist illustrates this in *Àdìitú* where Àrà-òtò who believes her family background scares men away from her, proposes to Ọ̀bédèjì saying:

Àwa obìnrin ti wọn bí nínú ilé ọlá ní iyà tiwa ti a ní jẹ́. Àti pa giri kí ọkùnrin kọ ẹnu sí wa láti fẹ́, ìṣòro ni. (*Adiitu* p.140)

Those of us that are born into a royal family do have our predicament. It is difficult for men to propose to us.

Àjẹ̀diran in *Igbó* cannot get someone to propose to her because of her witchcraft (*Igbó* p. 24-26). She later proposes to Olowo-aiye and they get married. In *Àdìitú*, Àdìitú work very hard to win Iyúnadé's heart but without success, according to Iyúnadé, Àdìitú is arrogant. Coincidentally, Àdìitú and Iyúnadé find themselves on a boat. This boat capsizes and by luck, the only survivors are Àdìitú and Iyúnadé who have to live together on a lonely island. Àdìitú thus becomes the only person left for Iyúnadé on that island. Iyúnadé who believes that her relationship with Àdìitú is predestined by God decides to abandon her pretence of not being interested in Àdìitú and eagerly expresses her love to him. According to her, she does not want to wait for any sugar-coated words from Àdìitú, she therefore proposes to him (*Àdìitú* p. 79). Àdìitú who also believes that everything works according to God's plan writes to remind Iyúnadé of his earlier proposal. As Àdìitú receives the letter from Iyúnadé, he gives Iyúnadé his own letter (*Àdìitú* p. 81). Thus, Àdìitú and Iyúnadé propose to each other. Fágúnwà sees nothing bad if ladies propose to men of their choice. He believes that only those that lack understanding will believe that only men can make proposal. According to Fágúnwà, a female-led-proposal is more reliable because before a woman can propose to a man she must have been so much in love with the man (*Igbó* p. 26). Fágúnwà's view here reveals clearly that there is gender inequality in some aspects of Yoruba culture, and because culture is dynamic, the novelist proposes a change.

10. The novelist condemns the Use of Alárenà (matchmaker)

Fágúnwà does not support the use of *Alárenà* (matchmaker) between a man and a lady that want to go into courtship. A man proposes to a lady directly or vice-versa for instance, in *Ògbójú*, Àkàrà-oògùn proposes to the beautiful lady with no one coming in between them (p. 43-44), in *Igbó*, Àjẹ̀diran proposes to Olówó-aiyé directly (p. 26). It is observed that in contemporary society, men and women

meet at various places such as schools, working places, markets, shopping malls, and even on internet where the opportunity abounds for them to propose to each other without any *Alárenà* (matchmaker). However, in some rare cases, a matchmaker creates link between a man and a woman though not in the traditional way we are used to. Nowadays, the practice of employing an *Alárenà* is gradually going into extinction. Since literature mirrors the society, it is assumed that the novelist reflects the modern Yorùbá society of his time.

11. **Fágúnwà condemns cohabitation**

In *Ògbójú*, *Kàkó* and his wife cohabited for seven years and had children before their wedding ceremony. This is done in accordance with their custom that states thus:

Ọdún kéjé tí iyàwó wọn bá ti ní bá wọn gbé ni wọn tó gbódò ẹ igbéyàwó- iyàwó a ti bímọ ̀tọkọtaya nàà a sì ti mọ iwà ara wọn. (*Ògbójú* p. 52).

They have to wed at the end of the seventh year of their cohabitation. The wife must have given birth to children and the couple must have understood themselves.

The custom states further that they can separate after the seventh year if they found themselves incompatible. The novelist condemns the culture by allowing separation to come up between *Kàkó* and his wife on their wedding day in spite of their claimed compatibility. *Kàkó* does not inform his wife when he hears a national call (*Ògbójú* p. 52). When the wife runs after him to ask for her offence, he tells her not to wait or rely on him any longer. One would think that male and female living together for the past seven years must have acquired a high level of love that can sustain their marriage. Surprisingly, one observes that there is not an iota of love between them; *Kàkó* kills the woman that bore him children. The novelist is indirectly telling the readers that cohabitation does not bring the type of love needed at courtship; it should therefore be discouraged. The novelist further illustrates his opinion in the lives of *Àdìitú* and *Iyúnadé* on *Erékùsù Ikúpàdé* (Ikúpàdé Island) where the two of them maintain their separate beds until after their wedding ceremony (*Àdìitú* p. 85). The novelist is of the opinion that sex should not be part of courtship but for marriage.

12. **Conclusion**

We have been able to discuss *Fágúnwà's* perception of courtship as depicted in his five novels. The work shows that *Fágúnwà* depicts letter-related-courtship which strengthens the level of love between two prospective lovers each time the letter is read and test-related-courtship that enables the woman to discover the man's ability. He advocates for reciprocity in love, unrelenting pressure on the part of the person initiating proposal, maintenance of close relationship between the two prospective lovers and gender equality in initiating proposal. According to the novelist love, wisdom and intimacy solidify courtship. The novelist is also of the opinion that everyone should express his or her love to the opposite sex directly without the employment of any matchmaker. In addition, he condemns cohabitation.

It is obvious that *Fágúnwà's* novels represent the social settings of the Yoruba people (a tribe he belongs to) but he expresses the intrinsic strand of modernity as it affects Yoruba society of his time. *Fágúnwà* should not be seen as a novelist condemning or criticizing the culture of his people or disregarding the culture of the people rather, he should be seen as 'a prophet of culture' that is he who knows the future occurrence of the living people. Most of the culture he depicts in his work that are alien to Yorùbá people prove prophetic in comparison with what goes on in contemporary Yorùbá society.

In the present Yorùbá society, parents rarely choose wives for their children. Youths of nowadays neither carry their parents along nor investigate the type of home their spouses come from; the belief of such youths is that they are old enough to plan for their future. Some just inform parents (especially poor ones that have little or nothing to contribute) of the day of their wedding ceremony because they are buoyant enough to finance the wedding. Most teenagers make friends at schools and later propose to each other. Some marry their face book friends that they never saw before the day of their wedding. It is now common for males and females in younger generations to initiate relationships and to propose marriages. They only introduce their future partners to their parents. Cohabitation is now rampant among youths especially in University environments or where they serve their fatherland

(National Youth Service Corps Members). They either get married or get separated after their course or after their service year. All these are responsible for broken homes that are now a common phenomenon in Yoruba society. In addition, almost all members in the society are now literate since the advent of Western education; prospective lovers exchange love letters. With the coming of modern technology, people especially teenagers send messages to themselves through social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, Wechat and others on their mobile phones (<https://makeawebsitehub.com>). All these changes are products of Western education, socialization, civilization, foreign religions and foreign culture. Fádípè (1970 p.73) notices this when he says that the Yorùbá marriage custom is not rigidly observed today as it was fifty or even twenty-five years ago. He explains further that except in the very conservative circles, arranged marriages are now a thing of the past.

Based on the explanation above, one would believe that Fágúnwà has predicted the future of courtship and even marriage in Yorùbáland. One notices that although Fágúnwà's novels draws immensely from Yoruba culture, some of the visions projected go beyond the Yoruba society of his time. Fágúnwà reveals clearly equality of male and female genders in the way he opposes the Yoruba custom that prevents ladies initiating proposal. Experience shows that men initiating proposal is not peculiar to Yorùbá alone. It is also common among other ethnic groups in Nigeria; like Igbo, Hausa and even throughout African countries. Only the whites accept women initiating proposal.

The reason behind Fágúnwà's ability to predict the future of Yoruba courtship is not far-fetched. Fágúnwà has been exposed to the outside world either through reading or traveling to some developed countries as mentioned in his biography. He is a product of mixed culture. He is aware of the changing patterns as well as the impact of Western civilization on traditional Yoruba culture, and he reflects all this faithfully in his novels. What the novelist is trying to depict is that the society should not see culture as being static, rather, it should be seen as being dynamic, and he therefore wants everybody to be careful. At that time, people that could read and write were few but he had the foresight that there would be a time when illiteracy would be a thing of the past; hence, he introduces letter-related-courtship being the type of courtship he personally experienced because of his exposure to foreign culture. Fágúnwà is a man of vision. Yorùbá culture is bound to change since we have other cultures competing with Yorùbá culture in our midst. There is interrelationship between Yorùbá people and other ethnic groups. There is bound to be exchange of culture. While the Novelist encourages Yorùbá to drop certain aspect of culture that does not augur well for the society; the use of alárenà (matchmaker), he is of the opinion that the society should also be careful not to imbibe foreign culture that will be detrimental to our good culture (cohabitation).

Summarily, Fágúnwà is aware of the fact that there is going to be a time when Western civilization would affect Yoruba culture; hence, he tries to expose the pros and cons of imbibing the foreign culture. In addition, this work reveals that Fágúnwà's work is not independent of his society. One will definitely regard Fágúnwà as a teacher of culture or an influencer of public mind.

Conclusively, culture is not seen as being static; Yoruba society should therefore move with time. In the light of these findings, it is suggested that Yorùbá society should imbibe good foreign courtship processes to complement the Yorùbá courtship process to meet the demands of the present-day society. From the point of view of Fágúnwà as a novelist, Yoruba society is able to see the need for a change in its culture.

6. Conclusion

The Analects were not created with the intention to be an exemplaristic case-by-case reference of morality, but rather a collection of Confucian teachings assembled with the intention to preserve and impart his words. Confucius' thought itself contained many direct, substantive references to exemplaristic morality. The format of the Analects is also heavily structured upon exemplaristic statements of morality or two or three-way dialogue that serve to elicit teachings of morality by example. Consequently, the Confucian Analects is highly exemplaristic and shows a high degree of correlation to exemplaristic epistemology. However, whilst it is highly exemplaristic, it is not a pure text of exemplaristic epistemology. The presence of a priori determinations of morality, unrelated thought experiments, poetic musings, accounts of daily life and reflections definitively proves it is not purely exemplaristic. In conclusion, the Confucian analects should be thought of as being highly exemplaristic

and showing a high degree of correlations to exemplaristic benchmarks, but not an exemplaristic epistemological account of morality in and of itself.

Traditional Chinese philosophy such as Confucianism was developed in a profoundly different socio-cultural context from Western philosophical ideas. Therefore, while the use of modern Western analytic structures can unveil much of the hidden message and intention of ancient Chinese philosophers, it would be epistemologically anachronistic to say that teaching through exemplars was what Confucius and the authors of *The Analects* had in mind. Therefore, perhaps it would be safe to say that the purpose of the application of epistemological structures to non-western philosophies, such as East Asian philosophies and Islamic philosophies, should be restricted to understanding of the text itself instead of interpreting the nature and purpose of the text's creation.

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